

district for its outstanding work in promoting adult literacy, and it is with a great sense of pride that I join citizens and officials of Longview, TX, and Gregg County in paying tribute to those community leaders and volunteers who have contributed so much to the success of this organization.

Literacy Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit organization consisting of more than 375 community programs in 42 states. The organization delivers local literacy services through a network of more than 50,000 volunteers nationwide who have helped more than half a million adults and their families gain literacy skills. It is quite an accomplishment for the East Texas Literacy Council to be chosen as the first local affiliate in the nation to receive accreditation from the Literacy Volunteers—and it is a testament to the dedication, hard work and quality of service of the Literacy Council's staff and volunteers.

The East Texas Literacy Council was founded as a community-based, nonprofit organization in 1987. Through collaboration with other community agencies, the Literacy Council provides opportunities for adults in Gregg County to develop the basic literacy skills necessary to attain self-sufficiency and to function successfully in their community. Last year more than 500 adults benefitted from this program—almost 200 learning basic literacy skills and more than 300 learning English as a Second Language. These adults were instructed by more than 100 volunteer tutors who received ten hours of basic literacy training.

Executive Director of the East Texas Literacy Council is Freda Peppard, who has provided effective leadership for the organization over the past nine years. Current officers of the Board of Directors are Mary Price, president; Clement Dunn, vice president; Jerre Jouett, secretary; and Jennifer Slade, treasurer. Others who have been instrumental in the Council's success include Cissy Ward, longtime community leader who helped organize the East Texas Literacy Council and became its first Executive Director, and Retta Kelly, formerly publisher of the Longview News-Journal, who served as the Council's first Board president. Another influential community leader, Nancy Jackson, served as Executive Director following Mrs. Ward's tenure. Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Jackson continue to advise and work with the Council.

The East Texas Literacy Council is a community success story—and an example of what can be accomplished through public/private funding and through community-based partnerships. Funding sources for the Literacy Council include the United Way, Community Development Block Grant funding and various fund-raising initiatives. Affiliations include Longview Partnership, Laubach Literacy Action, The Nonprofit Coalition and Literacy Volunteers of America.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of illiteracy to individuals, to their families and to society is enormous. Literacy programs, such as those sponsored by the East Texas Literacy Council, are vital in our efforts to help individuals acquire the skills they need to be productive citizens and to be able to support themselves and their families. It is a privilege to pay tribute today to this exemplary literacy organization in the Fourth District of Texas—the East Texas Literacy Council—and to those dedicated staff members and volunteers whose hard work has helped make this organization such a success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 16, 2000, during debate of H.R. 2372, the Property Takings legislation, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior family commitment. Unfortunately, I was unable to vote on rollcall votes 53, 54, and 55. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 53, the Boehlert substitute, "no" on rollcall vote 54, the Motion to Recommit, and "yes" on final passage of the bill—rollcall vote 55.

HONORING ZETA BETA TAU FRATERNITY AND ROGER WILLIAMS DAY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I applaud Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, my brotherhood, for celebrating the life of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island, and a strong supporter of religious and political liberty.

In 1631, clergyman Roger Williams, left England, a land where he was dubbed a nonconformist and was persecuted for his religious beliefs, and came to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in America. Along with him came his wife and great wind of change, idealism and freedom. He would be called a troublemaker, because he believed that the royal charter did not justify taking land that belonged to the Native Americans and declared that people should not be punished for religious differences. In 1664, he published his most famous work, "The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution", which upheld his argument for the separation of church and state. In 1657, as president of the Rhode Island colony, he fought to provide refuge for Quakers who had been banished from other colonies, even though he disagreed with their religious teachings.

Today, as a member of Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, I join my brotherhood in remembering and recognizing Roger Williams as an early champion of democracy and religious freedom. As we struggle against religious intolerance throughout our world, we should look to men, such as Roger Williams, who stood for freedom, in a world of persecution.

I am proud to be a member of the distinguished brotherhood of Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity, a organization of young men who are dedicating this day to the principles of tolerance, understanding, and brotherly love, by remembering Roger Williams.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, due to a commitment in my district on Tuesday, March 21,

2000, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall numbers 56 and 57. The votes I missed include rollcall vote 56 on Suspending the Rules and Agreeing to H. Con. Res. 288, Recognizing the importance of families and children in the United States and expressing support for the goals and ideas of National Family Day; and rollcall vote 57 on Suspending the Rules and Agreeing to H. Res. 182, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the National Park Service should take full advantage of support services offered by the Department of Defense.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 56 and 57.

HONORING 20TH CENTURY WOMEN

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 22, 2000

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of extraordinary women of the 20th Century. Throughout our history women artists such as Missouri author, Laura Ingalls Wilder, have brought about needed social change in our state and nation. Today, I honor a recording artist From Kennett, Missouri who has maintained strong ties to our state. Sheryl Crow joins a list of Missouri women who have contributed to an extraordinary century of women.

Ms. Crow's parents were big band musicians who encouraged her musical skills at an early age. She began playing the piano around the age of six and composed her first song at age 13. In the 1990's, Sheryl Crow forcefully expressed her thoughts and emotions on social causes such as youth violence, addressed in her platinum album lyrics, "Watch out sister, Watch out brother/Watch our children as they kill each other/With a gun they brought at the Wal-Mart discount stores" in her ongoing battle with the discount giant over guns and children. In retribution, Wal-Mart refused to sell her award winning records. A Florida State Supreme Court eventually ruled against Wal-Mart for illegally selling ammunition to minors who used the bullets to kill a Pensacola man.

Ms. Crow's music encompasses her personal experience and her passionately held beliefs to electrify audiences. Inspired by the likes of Walt Whitman and Bob Dylan. Sheryl Crow has influenced a generation of women to artistry and activism. Her ability to span generations and musical tastes has led Ms. Crow to be one of the most sought after musicians of our time. Her reputation for taking risks is demonstrated by her professional and personal courage to make mistakes and to achieve success. Her song, "My Favorite Mistake," reminds us that we must all have the courage to take risks in order to create something worthwhile.

In 1994 Sheryl Crow won Gammy Awards for Best New Artist, Record of the Year, and Best Female Pop Vocal Performance for her hit "All I Wanna Do." Two years later, the singer/songwriter won Grammys for Best Rock Album and Best Female Rock Vocal Performance for the song, "If It Makes You Happy." Her 1998 double platinum album, "The Globe Sessions" was named Best Rock Album at the 1999 Grammy Awards. Her latest effort,